

SUBJECT:	MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY
MEETING:	Individual Cabinet Member Decision – Cabinet Member for Equalities & Engagement, County Cllr Angela Sandles
DATE:	11th September 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To approve the revised Monmouthshire Local Toilets Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the updated Monmouthshire Local Toilets Strategy, as provided in Appendix One, is approved and published.

2.2 That progress continues to be monitored annually via Place Scrutiny Committee.

2.3 Upon approval, the strategy is published bilingually on the Council's website and shared with Welsh Government.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 'Provision of Toilets' came into force on 31st May 2018. It places a duty on each local authority in Wales to prepare and publish a local toilet strategy for its area.

3.2 Local Authorities in Wales have the responsibility to –

- Assess the need for toilet provision for their communities
- Plan to meet those needs
- Produce a local toilets strategy, and
- Review, update and publicise revisions to the strategy.

3.3 This Authority, after various consultations and scrutiny, approved the initial Local Toilets Strategy, via individual Cabinet Member decision on 12th June 2019. The duty to prepare a local toilets strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. Indeed, further to the work of the 'Public Convenience Working Group' in 2009 (a sub-group of the then Strong Communities Select Committee), most public toilet blocks were successfully transferred to Town and Community Councils to manage. It is for the County Council to take a strategic view on how publicly accessible toilets can be provided and accessed across the county.

- 3.4 Five years on the strategy, attached as Appendix One, has been updated and incorporates the following :-
- Original comments made by Strong Communities Select Committee under the previous administration.
 - Opinions expressed via a public survey and during the public consultation that ran early 2019. This included comments from Town and Community Councils and Gwent Police.
 - Two surveys of the 18 public toilet blocks, one by Members and the other by Property Services in early 2019. Annual inspections of the traditional blocks are now conducted annually by the Environmental Health section.
 - Comments and direction provided by Place Scrutiny Committee over the last two years
 - Progress as reported by various sections of this Council, namely Environmental Health, Landlord Services, Facilities and MonLife.
- 3.5 The statutory guidance from Welsh Government has been followed in preparing and updating the local strategy. One key undertaking was to ‘map out’ all existing publicly accessible toilets in the county. This comprehensive map – showing locations, opening times, etc. – is now provided on an all-Wales basis. The map is also provided via our own website for open access.
- 3.6 The key actions identified in 2019 have progressed - see Section 15 of the strategy - and, as would be expected over time, new ones added. The primarily additional actions, as requested by Place Committees 2023 and 2024, are as follows –
- Ensure there is an adequate number of ‘stoma-friendly’ public toilets in the county. Improvements have been made to our disabled facilities but we await bilingual signage from Colosomy UK. Publicly available toilets in some of our buildings, eg. leisure centres, will be fully compliant so stickers advising ‘stoma-friendly’ will be displayed when available.
 - Ensure the ‘Changing Places’ facilities (for more profoundly disabled persons) in our Leisure Centres are placed on the ‘Changing Places’ national website. Two centres are now fully compliant – Monmouth and Chepstow – with the others (Abergavenny and Caldicot) categorised as ‘other facilities’. This is because they don’t reach the overall space criteria but both are recognised as high standard facilities.
 - The Authority supports the national ‘Bins for Boys’ campaign and will review current provision across the county, together with Town & Community Councils. Abergavenny Town Council, are piloting the provision of bins for male use in the town over the coming months. MCC will learn from their experiences and seek, where deemed appropriate, to provide additional bins in facilities we operate from early 2025.
 - Unisex toilet provision to be considered in addition to single sex toilets as and when alterations are made to existing facilities, in full consultation with stakeholders. Members emphasised the need to ensure the safety of all users when considering unisex provision.
 - Landlord Services to review the Service Level Agreements with Town & Community Council (T&CC) public toilet providers. Transfer agreements have now been sourced to clarify roles and responsibilities between MCC and T&CC’s.

3.7 It is recognised that having 17 traditional toilet blocks across the county is highly positive for the numerous reasons described in the revised strategy, for example as one essential criteria to being age friendly. There are 15 other publicly available toilets in MCC buildings, such as hubs, museums and leisure centres, together with 3 others – as listed at the end of the strategy. 35 in total is commendable and the ambition is to ensure standards are maintained – together with our partner providers – and they remain free to use.

3.8 All 2024 amendments are shown in red in Appendix One. These will all revert to black type prior to publication.

4. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT, (includes equality, future generations, social justice, safeguarding and corporate parenting):

4.1 The updated 'Integrated Impact Assessment' is provided as Appendix Two, attached.

4.2 Overall, if actions are implemented, the strategy will have a very positive impact. Public provision will be maintained or improved, access information enhanced, encouraging people to take exercise and stay more physically active.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

5.1 Producing a Local Toilet Strategy is a statutory duty, as required under Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017. This Authority must prepare and publish a local toilet strategy for its area and keep it up to date.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

6.1 An evaluation of cleanliness, overall provision, any increase/decrease in levels of anti-social behaviour, etc. will be regularly carried out with facility providers, notably Town and Community Councils. Annual inspections of all public toilet blocks are conducted by Environmental Health.

6.2 The key actions are provided in Section 15 of the strategy, with those identified more recently listed in 3.6 above. Progress will be monitored against the actions specified to ensure the strategy is effective. A written report will continue to be provided annually to Place Scrutiny Committee so Members can evaluate progress by this Authority and other providers.

7. REASONS:

7.1 The preparation and publication of a Local Toilet Strategy is a legal requirement, as outlined in Section 3 of the strategy.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The resource implications of providing the original strategy, together with this updated version, has involved significant Officer time. As per 6.1 of the strategy, Officers from Public Protection, Facilities, Landlord Services, Finance, MonLife, Policy & Development, Communications and Shared Resources Service have all contributed.
- 8.2 The one-off Welsh Government grant of £17,200 was transferred to Landlord Services in 2023/24 and was used for further refurbishment work to our publicly available toilets.

9. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Head of Commercial & Landlord Services
Facilities Supervisor

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

'The Provision of Toilets in Wales: Local Toilet Strategies', Statutory Guidance, August 2018 – Welsh Government
MCC's initial Local Toilets Strategy, June 2019

9. AUTHOR:

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10. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Appendices

Appendix One Monmouthshire Local Toilets Strategy 2024
Appendix Two Integrated Impact Assessment